



Department of Justice

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FOUR MEN INDICTED ON TERRORISM CHARGES RELATED TO CONSPIRACY TO ATTACK MILITARY FACILITIES, OTHER TARGETS

Alleged Conspiracy Targeted U.S. Military Facilities, Israeli and Jewish Targets in California

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Four men have been indicted by a federal grand jury in Santa Ana, California, for their alleged roles in a terrorist plot to attack U.S. military facilities, Israeli government facilities and Jewish synagogues in the Los Angeles area, the Department of Justice announced today.

The seditious conspiracy charged in the indictment, which also included nearly a dozen gas station robberies intended to raise money for the terrorist operation, was allegedly run by an inmate at California State Prison-Sacramento who founded a radical Islamic organization known as Jam'iyat Ul-Islam Is-Saheeh, or JIS. Recruitment of participants in the conspiracy began in prison, according to the indictment. Upon being released from prison, defendant Levar Washington then allegedly recruited other co-conspirators to plot terrorist acts and commit armed robberies.

The six-count indictment returned today charges the following individuals:

- Kevin James, 29, a/k/a "Shakyh Shahaab Murshid" and other aliases. James, a U.S. national, allegedly founded JIS in 1997 while in prison;
- Levar Washington, 25, a/k/a "Abdur Rahman" and other aliases, a U.S. national;
- Gregory Patterson, 21, a/k/a "Bilal," a U.S. national;
- Hammad Samana, 21, a lawful permanent U.S. resident originally from Pakistan.

The indictment charges all four defendants with conspiracy to levy war against the United States government through terrorism and conspiracy to possess and discharge firearms in furtherance of crimes of violence. Washington, Patterson and Samana are charged with conspiracy to kill members of the U.S. government uniformed services and conspiracy to kill foreign officials. Washington and Patterson are further charged with interference with commerce by robbery and using and carrying a firearm in connection with a crime of violence.

All four defendants are currently in custody on federal, state or local charges.

"Today's indictment alleges that these defendants turned their terrorist plans and actions against locations in their own country, targeting American military facilities, religious institutions, and other facilities right here in the United States," said Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales. "Thanks to the work of able investigators at all levels of government, any further acts of violence arising from this dangerous conspiracy -- a conspiracy which included identification of target locations, procurement of weapons, firearms and physical training, recruitment efforts, and financing operations through armed robberies -- were prevented."

“This case illustrates the importance of law enforcement partnerships and the cooperation we see every day in our terrorism task forces,” said FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III. “Sharing intelligence about criminal elements in our communities gives all of us a better understanding of individuals who may be supporting terrorist organizations or plotting terrorist activity.”

U.S. Attorney Debra Wong Yang of the Central District of California said, “This case demonstrates the value of the Joint Terrorism Task Force. Diligent work by the local police led to the disruption of a terrorist plot that had the potential to cause significant bloodshed. They reported their findings to the FBI and all levels of law enforcement worked together to protect the United States and her people. Terrorist organizations have so far been unsuccessful in executing their devious plots in Southern California, and I promise that we will all work as hard as possible to continue to keep you safe.”

The indictment alleges that James recruited fellow prison inmates to join JIS and preached the duty of members to target for violent attack any enemies of Islam, or “infidels,” including the U.S. government and Jewish and non-Jewish supporters of Israel. James allegedly distributed a document in prison that justified the killing of “infidels,” and made members take an oath not to talk about the existence of JIS. He also allegedly sought to establish groups or “cells” of JIS members outside of prison to carry out violent attacks against “perceived infidels,” including the U.S. government, the government of Israel, and Jewish people.

Washington, also an inmate at the Sacramento prison, joined JIS in about November 2004, and was paroled at the end of the month, according to the indictment. In December 2004, James allegedly instructed Washington to recruit five people to train in covert operations, acquire firearms with silencers, and find contacts with explosives expertise or learn to make bombs that could be activated from a distance.

The indictment alleges that beginning in about December 2004, Washington, Patterson and Samana targeted and conducted Internet research on and surveillance of U.S. military facilities – such as recruitment centers and military bases – in the Los Angeles area, as part of their plot to kill U.S. military personnel. In July 2005, Patterson and Samana allegedly used computers to research military targets in the Los Angeles area, while Samana drafted a document listing Israeli and U.S. targets in Los Angeles. In addition to the U.S. military targets, the co-conspirators specifically targeted Israeli and Jewish facilities in the Los Angeles area, including the Israeli Consulate, El Al (the national airline of Israel) and synagogues. They also allegedly engaged in firearms and physical training, in preparation for attacks.

According to the indictment, the defendants purchased weapons or otherwise tried to acquire weapons in furtherance of their terrorist conspiracy and made efforts to raise money by robbing gas stations. The indictment alleges that 11 times beginning May 30, 2005, the defendants – armed with shotguns – robbed or attempted to rob gas stations in the several cities and towns in Southern California, including Los Angeles, Torrance, Playa Del Ray, Bellflower, Pico Rivera, Walnut, Orange, Playa Vista and Fullerton. The indictment alleges that during the gas station robbery spree, Patterson updated James on the progress of the planned war of terrorism against the U.S. government.

If convicted of all of the charges, the defendants face life in prison.

These criminal charges are being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kevin E. Smith, Deirdre Eliot and Greg Staples of the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Central District of California. The criminal investigation into the alleged terrorist conspiracy was conducted by the Long Beach Joint Terrorism Task Force. The lead investigative agencies in this investigation were the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Los Angeles Police Department, the Torrance Police Department, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and the California Department of Justice. Substantial assistance was provided by the Counterterrorism Section of the Criminal Division, U.S. Department of Justice; the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Patrol at the Department of Homeland Security; the Drug Enforcement Administration; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; and the United States Coast Guard. Participating in the Long Beach Joint Terrorism Task Force and providing support during the investigation were the Long Beach Police Department, the Los Angeles Port Police, the Redondo Beach Police Department, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office work collaboratively with federal prosecutors during the investigation.

The charges contained in this indictment are allegations only and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless convicted at trial.

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